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Prayers of Concern

Contemporary Prayers for Private and Public Worship

SOCIAL PROGRESS • JUNE 1955

Social Progress

Published by the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to provide a forum for the Church on subjects of social concern for Christians. It includes program resources, legislative developments, and guides to worship, study, and action for leaders of social action groups in local churches, presbyteries, synods, presbyterial and synodical societies. Articles represent the opinions of the authors—not the official policy of the Department of Social Education and Action or of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

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CONTENTS : JUNE, 1955

PAGE

Prayers for General Use 3
Pardon 3
Petition 4
Discipleship and Witness 7
Prayers for Special Use 12
World Peace 12
Economic Justice 15
Better Human Relations 17
The Nation 19
The Neighborhood 23
The Home 26
Education 27
Alcoholism 29
The Answers, *by Darius Leander Swann* 31

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FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT . . .

Under God's Judgment

THIS issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS is a compilation of contemporary prayers of social concern, contributed by persons interested in many aspects of the Church's life. The prayers encompass a variety of subjects and take into account the Scriptural and theological foundations of Christian social witness. They recognize God's sovereign justice and mercy, his purposes in history, and his grace through Jesus Christ. They deal with many of the manifestations of man's sin and the social issues which stand under God's judgment.

Collections of prayers have always had an important place in public worship and personal meditation. These new devotional materials affirm the constant need for undergirding study and action with prayer. It is vain and foolish for Christians to undertake their social responsibilities without submission to God's will and the guidance of his Spirit. Christians deal with controversy and differences in opinion in a context of worship; prayer is needed for perspective and patience.

Some churches are discovering the power of prayer fellowships and directed prayer for particular problems and projects: A church in an Eastern city requested each church family to join in daily prayers for a church-wide observance of United Nations Week. A group of courageous women in a Southern church have worked

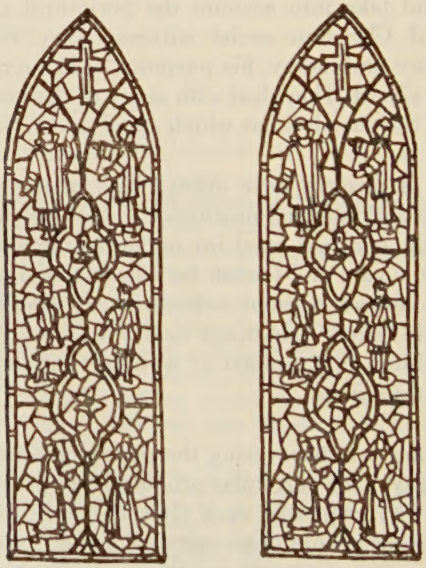
steadfastly to establish an inclusive fellowship with the Negro women of the community, strengthened by each other's prayers.

In every church there are people who for various reasons cannot participate in a study group or bring testimony in a Congressional committee, but they can support with prayer those who are in the vanguard of social action.

Prayer, as we have been describing it, is not a pious retreat from world conflicts, but recognition of the limitations of our being, our dependence upon a power beyond our own for fulfillment of our human efforts.

We pray not to escape conflict or frustration, but for God's grace to transcend life's tragedy. Prayer does not relieve men of their responsibility in history, but opens countless opportunities for rededication and redemption.

—Clifford Earle, Margaret Kuhn, H. B. Sissel



Prayers for General Use

Pardon

ALMIGHTY God, judge of all the nations and judge of our own nation, who canst make even the wrath of men to praise thee, we ask thy forgiveness for the sins which we, the comfortable and well-fed, have committed against thee and thy children.

For our complacency and lack of concern in the midst of human need, when others are sick, starving, and dying, we ask thy forgiveness. For our blindness, individually and nationally, to our world responsibility, in a day when no nation can live unto itself, we ask thy forgiveness.

For our full stomachs, our new houses, our expensive tastes, developed on an island of plenty in the midst of an ocean of misery and want, we ask thy forgiveness.

For our easy identification of personal success and personal virtue, of national prosperity and national goodness, in a world where men are trampled down through no fault of their own, we ask thy forgiveness.

For our temptation to say that might makes right, to "go it alone," or to try to live without the confidence of our fellow men, we ask thy forgiveness.

Grant, O Lord, that we may see the folly of our ways before it is too late, and that, guided by thy power and spirit, we may be led through the way of contrition to the way of renewal, and thus make use of those good gifts which thou hast given us, not simply for ourselves but in the service of all men, whom thy Son didst die to save, and in whose name we pray. Amen.

—Robert McAfee Brown, Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.

ALMIGHTY God, who inhabitest eternity and lookest into the souls of men, we thank thee that thou art a God of mercy as well as a God of might, for we have done much to deserve thy judgment. We have compromised with evil and served thee with half a heart. We have been preoccupied with trifles in a day of tragedy. We have been more concerned with prosperity than with piety; more zealous for power than for purity; more intent to win the praises of men than to do that which is well-pleasing to thee.

Give us the candor to confess our guilt in the assurance that thou wilt accept our repentance and renew a right spirit within us. Cleanse our hearts from callousness, our minds from carelessness, and our souls from meanness. Save us from contentment with small success and enlist us in the cause that shall one day unite all men in a Kingdom of brotherhood and peace. We pray in the name of him who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, even Jesus Christ. Amen.—*Edward K. Trefz, Associate Director, Adult Work, Board of Christian Education.*

Petition

OUR Father, God, lift us into thy presence and awaken within us knowledge of our unity in thee. As men of earth, help us to live in constant awareness of the hopes and hungers, the distresses and disappointments, the aspirations and longings, of our fellow men. As children of thine, lead us in thy ways of righteousness and grant us the power and the courage to do justice and to love kindness in all our dealings with one another.

In blindness of mind and hardness of heart, we have denied thy truth, and betrayed thy love. In offending our brother, we have sinned against thee; in ignoring our neighbor, we have turned our backs upon thee. Forgive us, O Father, and in thy mercy reclaim us to live as members of that blessed family bound by thy spirit in a community of labor, love, and peace. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.—*Frank T. Wilson, Dean, School of Religion, Howard University.*

for service

Our Father who art perfect love, forgive our selfishness; grant us the eyes of Christ, our Lord, that we may clearly see thy children who are in fear, sorrow, hunger, and pain. Employ us as thy agents to share, to comfort, and to heal.

Open thou our eyes and ears and hearts that we may be thy servants unto all who are afflicted, even as thou hast loved and ministered unto us through thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—*Robert J. Cadigan, Editor,* Presbyterian Life.

OUR Father, we thy people need thy guidance for these difficult days. The storms of fear and doubt rage about us. Help us to be still and know that thou art God. We are mindful of thy continuing watchfulness over our feeble efforts to do thy will. We thank thee for thy Son, Jesus Christ, who gave the world a new concept of individual worth and responsibility. Forgive us, O God, when we take for granted the blessings of liberty which we enjoy only through thy love and concern for mankind. Help us to be better stewards of the time and ability given to us by thee. In school and medical center, in shop and office, courtroom and family dwelling place, may thy peace and power continue to offer new hope and courage to all who have lost their way. Bind together the hearts and minds of thy people, that they may know the joy that comes to those who are gathered together in the name of Jesus Christ. Even when we are faced with sorrow and disaster, may the calmness of thy Holy Spirit steady our hands and strengthen our purpose to become complete disciples of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.—*Robert H. Scanland, Division of Audio-Visual Education, Board of Christian Education.*

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in time of decision

O God, whose righteous nature requires us to be righteous, but who redeemest us when we fall: Enable us, we pray, to be obedient to thy Spirit in the decision that now faces us. Help us to know right from wrong. Keep us from using excuses that only camouflage our timidity and our loveless-ness. Where obedience to love may make us hurt our neighbor, help us to share his suffering as those who are also responsible for the sin of the world. It is hard to see our way clearly. O Holy Spirit, help us. And, O Lord Jesus Christ, through the merit of thy sacrifice, forgive whatever wrong we shall do in this choice before us. In thy name we pray.—*George L. Hunt, Editor for Adult Publications, Board of Christian Education.*

OUR Father, who art with us here on earth even as thou art in heaven, may all that we do in our daily life show forth our belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, to the end that thy Kingdom come.

May we ever strive to bring about a more equitable sharing of thy sufficient blessings so that fear may vanish and peace reign. Lead us from the temptation of any false feelings of superiority and forgive us every thought, deed, or action that fails to reveal our love for the Lord our God and for our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

—Henry Lee Willet, Member,
Board of Christian Education and
Counseling Committee of Social Education and Action.

ALMIGHTY God and everlasting Father, we ask that thy Holy Spirit may come upon us in all his cleansing power. Prepare our hearts and minds for his coming that we may get a clear conception of his mission. Let him reveal unto us thy will in an age packed with clashes and tensions of human emotions. Grant unto us grace, wisdom, and strength to do thy will in every life situation. Through Jesus Christ we ask all of these. Amen.—*A. H. George, Theological Seminary, Johnson C. Smith University.*

WE PRAY with great earnestness, dear Father, because thy children are suffering by the million. Cold war means deep hatred between men. Stop, we beseech thee, the cruelty that is caused by the scramble of nations for the physical goods with which thou hast endowed our world. Change the hearts of those men who are so unfair as to judge a brother by the color of his skin. Forgive us for wasting our substance on gambling and liquor.

Use thy divine power to stir the consciences of men until they long to share with others the abundant life in Christ. Amen.—*Wilbur LaRoe, Jr., former Moderator and original member of the Counseling Committee on Social Education and Action.*

ALMIGHTY and sovereign God, whose purposes we would make ours, give us, we pray, courage and wisdom to be Christian. O Jesus Christ, light of the world, shine upon the darkness in our minds and hearts that we may understand thy way. O Word of God incarnate, speak to us that amidst all the strident voices of the world we may be able to distinguish love from sentimentality, principle from stubbornness, and courage from foolhardiness. O Holy Spirit, sustainer and comforter, let thy presence be so much with us that we may be able to stand alone when all men revile us for Christ's sake. Teach us to depend upon communion with thee beyond all earthly relationships. Give us strength to suffer if need be for our faith. O triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, use us for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of Christ. For his sake. Amen.

—Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

for the church and its witness to the world

Lord of the Church, we bless thee for our fellowship in one Body of Christ. We rejoice that it is a fellowship which joins earth and heaven and unites us with all the generations that have found in Christ the true meaning of life. We rejoice also that it is a world-wide fellowship, making us one with men and women of every land and clime who know him as Saviour and Lord. May we in our own time and in our own place be worthy members of this glorious fellowship.

Forgive us for our easy contentment when in the Church we conform to patterns derived from the world around us instead of guiding its life by standards derived from its Lord. Give to thy Church a holy indignation against every oppression of the weak. Keep it full of compassion for every human need. Make it sensitive to every cry for justice. Help it to overcome all divisiveness within itself. Grant to thy whole Church throughout the world a fuller realization of what thou dost mean it to be—a redeemed community out of every race and tongue and nation, united at the deepest level of life by a common allegiance to one Saviour and Lord. Amen.—*Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary, National Council of Churches.*

O GOD, mighty as thou art, teach us to love thee with our minds. Help us to concentrate our conscious thought upon thee and thy goodness to us. Lift from our minds all clouds of doubt and perplexity which warp our thinking and tend to make us forget the joy and love which are also present.

Teach us to love thee with our hearts. Banish by the power of thy spirit all self-seeking, all self-satisfaction, all self-will. Cleanse our hearts from the poison of resentments and prejudices which so effectually block our love for thee and for others. Teach us to love and to serve our best selves and then to render equal loyalty and service to the best that is in every other man. Keep us from exercising the judgment that condemns weakness; create in us the love that inspires strength.

Teach us to love thee with our outward words and actions, O God. Restrain those bitter, cynical, cold words that rise from us in moments of disillusionment to hurt, mislead, and confuse other lives. Give us power to speak words of faith, of comfort, of courage, and of forgiveness. Strengthen our hands in thy service. May we continually minister thy spiritual and material blessings to a world that cries aloud for both. Into every life, empower us to pour whatever we have of substance, time, and faith.

Enlarge our minds that we may see the need that lies beyond our own narrow lives. Increase our courage that we may boldly face the evil that afflicts our world. Multiply our faith in thee that we may press the battle against war and injustice. So control our individual lives that the communal life which we make up will be also controlled by thee. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.—*Ganse Little, Pasadena Presbyterian Church; President, Board of Christian Education.*

OUR Father, unite our hearts with the hearts of all mankind, that we may never seek for ourselves that which would injure others, and that we may always seek for others the highest good that we seek for ourselves and our loved ones. Give us an imagination that will interpret statistical reports in terms of the human beings, their sufferings and longings, to which such reports refer. Give us courage to win for others in our generation a substantial new measure of justice and free opportunity.

Let the light of thy purposes shine upon our path, so that we may see clearly our duty and walk with boldness toward universal peace. Bless every organization of men whose purposes serve thy will, and may we be devoted friends and advocates of every plan by which mankind climbs slowly from darkness unto thee. In the name of Jesus, Friend, Saviour, and Guide. Amen.—*Charles J. Turck, Macalester College.*

O THOU who hast called us to do thy will on earth as it is now being done in heaven, who hast promised the power and abiding presence of thy Spirit to all who obey thy call: Make us willing to do the right that we already see and to live above the fears of what people may think of us if we break with the patterns of our neighborhood. Keep us from the sin of unfaithfulness or disloyalty which crucifies the Son of God afresh and puts him to an open shame. Make us aware of the network of customs and traditions binding our thinking and our doing in conformity to the world about us. Free us from enslavement to the false and superficial standards of our society, and help us to think and live like children of our Heavenly Father. Send us forth each day in the calm assurance that "the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." Sustain us, then, in loyal allegiance to our true fatherland. Amen.

—Aubrey N. Brown, Editor,
The Presbyterian Outlook.

O GOD, we turn to thee as the compass needle swings toward the pole. Distant though we are from thy righteousness, there is in our souls an impulse that sometimes wavers, but turns at last in needful desire toward the magnetism of thy goodness—our lives' true north.

Summon us to work with thee for a world in which thy will is more fully done. Direct us to curb the selfish individualism which banishes brotherhood, the acquisitiveness which destroys co-operation, the lust which debases life and love, the military-mindedness which prevents peace, and the secularism which rejects thee.

Bless all those who are seeking to remove the barriers that estrange faiths, that segregate races, and that make nations suspicious and afraid. May those who grapple with prejudice and hatred be undergirded by thy strong love, O God, so that any ridicule or hostility that they suffer shall be a small price for the hope of a united humanity.

In the twilight of these uncertain times, may all Christians be morning stars of a lasting day. Make us willing to decrease that the light of Jesus Christ may increase. To this end we not only offer our prayers in his name, but also pledge to thee our lives. In his spirit. Amen.—*Harold Leonard Bowman, First Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill.*

the way and the truth

Almighty God, who didst create man in thine own image, and who didst bestow upon him the world and all of its benefits with the command that he was to replenish the earth and subdue it, forgive us that we have so often turned thy gifts to improper use, and have forgotten thy claims upon us and our responsibility to our fellow men, who are equally loved of thee.

Look down with pity upon us and lift us from the distress into which we have fallen. Save us from war and the threat of war, from poverty and all its attendant evils, from all strife of race and class. Show us the way of redemption which thou hast provided through thy Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to overcome the selfishness and indolence of our natures, to put away hatred and arrogance and contempt for those who differ from us, and to follow more closely in the footsteps of him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." May his way become increasingly the way of all men, and may it become for us all the way of lasting prosperity and peace. Through him who is the way and the truth and the life. Amen.—*Ernest Trice Thompson, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.*

O GOD, our Father and our Redeemer, hear us as we pray not only for ourselves but for all men everywhere. We lift our hearts in praise and gratitude that we have a share in doing thy work here on earth. We give thanks that thou hast set us in families and in communities where we may live in brotherhood and thus catch a vision of thy plan of one great family around the earth. Give us a sense of responsibility toward all these children of thine, and grant us courage to stand against all powers of evil which would destroy their human worth. As Christian citizens, keep us ever alert to the particular needs of our fellow men as we see them day by day. May we not draw back when we should stand firm and express our opinion. May we not be afraid of positive action even though we know that the danger of such decisions might affect our business and social standing. Guide us that we may see clearly and act wisely as we set out to accomplish thy divine will here on earth. O thou God of mercy and compassion, hear these petitions, we pray, and keep us ever in the consciousness of thy divine love. Amen.—*Gray W. Proffitt, Maryville, Tenn., Member, Board of Christian Education.*

O GOD, whose eternal word lighteth every man that cometh into the world: We pray thee to shed upon us the light that is of thee, that we may clearly see and understand the way in which we ought to walk, and teach others the wisdom that is from above. Give us grace to cherish the gift of reason, and in the use of it to direct our affairs as thou desirest. Put away from us all slothfulness of thought and carelessness of word, lest by our folly we betray the reasonable ordering of human life that is according to thy purpose and design. Teach us the worth of intellectual discipline, the virtue of studiousness, and the excellence of meditation: that in all labors of the mind we may be workmen who need not be ashamed, and by our efforts glorify thee and serve our fellow men. Through Jesus Christ, our Teacher and our Lord. Amen.

—Norman F. Langford, Editor in Chief of Curriculum, Board of Christian Education.

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ETERNAL God, in whose light we see light, and in whose service we find our perfect freedom, we give thee thanks for minds to know thee and hearts to respond to thine infinite love. We remember with gratitude the men of other days whose response to thy truth has become the foundation for the wondrous discoveries of our times. We humbly confess the dullness of our hearts, and seek forgiveness for long allegiance to half-truth and ancient error. In the midst of world struggle for the minds of men, grant unto us the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Lead us to think clearly upon the conflicting claims of our times, and to discover with patience and concern the ways of justice and peace. So deliver us from conformity to this world, by the renewing of our minds, that we shall know what is thy good and acceptable and perfect will, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Herbert N. Brockway, Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church, Ill.; Member, Counseling Committee on Social Education and Action.*

Prayers for Special Use

World Peace

O THOU who hast made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, forgive us that we have so often shed our blood in conflict rather than in peace. Forgive us for our hatreds, fears, distrust, and divisiveness, and for the deeper sins that have caused them. Forgive us for the bad blood of our weaknesses. May the good and redeeming blood of Christ cleanse us, renew us, and unite us with thee and with our fellow men.

We pray for peace on earth, for good will among men. May the United Nations ever speak and act with patient and productive boldness.

We pray for peace on earth, for good will among men. May America dare to be Christian in itself and in every world relationship.

We pray for peace on earth, for good will among men. Most of all, we pray that the Church of Christ in our land and every land may so proclaim and demonstrate the ways of divine peace and Christian unity that all men shall be saved and all nations shall be ruled by thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Charles T. Leber, General Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions.

O GOD, we pray thee for the people caught in the midst of the turmoil of violence and revolution. We pray for those gentle folk of all races who shrink from the use of force and arms. We pray that they may remain true to their trust in the power of reason and good will. Dissuade and overrule, we pray thee, those who would destroy us by urging that we depend upon violence and physical power. Rid the world of militarism and the dependence upon armaments. Hear our prayer, for we pray in the name of the mighty and gentle Prince of Peace. Amen.—*E. Fay Campbell, Secretary, Division of Higher Education, Board of Christian Education.*

O GOD, our Father, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting; whose word returneth not unto thee void but worketh thy perfect will in all who embrace it; who in long-suffering love beareth with thy children as they reap the sorrow they have sown, or die for the evil which is mockery to God who cannot be mocked: O thou just and wise but merciful Father, turn back our captivity to the habits of life which have played us false; be not unmoved by our travail of soul as we slow down the works of life to fashion instruments of death. Be merciful, that the good within us be not utterly lost in the poison and rubble of atomic bombs.

O thou who knowest how helpless we are to do thy will, be pleased to preserve the truth of the gospel and the love that suffereth long and is kind until the travail of our souls be relieved. We humbly beseech thee, Sovereign God of all goodness and truth, to preserve our noble heritage of faith and grant us vision, wisdom, and courage to know and serve the Prince of Peace. Purge our hearts and minds of conceit and vainglory, of ignorance and fear, of bitterness and resentment. Make us to covet for others all good things we demand for ourselves.

In this time of tension and violence, raise up children of humility, reason, and good will, that all rulers and peoples may learn the more excellent Way that leadeth unto life and peace, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.—*John Paul Jones, The Union Church of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, N. Y.*

OUR Father, God of the nations, we ask for vision to view the world as thou dost view it. Give us the long look to see the struggles of peoples and nations with the perspective of time.

Thou hast given us the privilege of living in a day of unrest and revolution. May our courage and our faith match this hour. Behind the unrest may we see the struggles of peoples and of nations toward the freedoms of life. Within revolution, remind us that the gospel too is revolutionary. In the struggle of man with man, people with people, and cause with cause, give us wisdom, O God, to know when to wait patiently and when to speak and act with conviction. Endow us, thy children, with courage to fulfill faithfully both ministries.

While peace seems distant, we pray that the nations may travel the road to peace. May we submit ourselves to the disciplines of peace. We pray to become ever instruments of thy peace. Amen.—*Neva B. Palmeter, Director of Missionary Education, Board of Christian Education.*

for righteousness and peace

Eternal God our Father, who hast made of one blood every nation of men that they should dwell together upon the face of the whole earth, forgive the unhappy divisions which afflict us, and the strife by which our common life has been marred. Remind us now of all the bonds by which we are made one. Stir up within us a sense of comradeship and service, and grant that we may regard one another with humility and understanding. Deepen our awareness of thy Fatherhood, that we may know more fully of our brotherhood. Restrain the hands and wills of those who do violence against their fellows, and make wars to cease throughout the earth. Give wisdom and courage to all who strive to heal the wounds of prejudice and hate. Direct the leaders of the nations that they may guide their peoples into righteousness and peace. Bless our land and all the lands of earth, and use them in thy loving purpose to bring to pass that realm of concord and truth of which our Lord Jesus dreamed and for which he lived and died. This we ask in the name which is above every name, even the name of the Prince of Peace, Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Phillips P. Elliott, First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, N. Y.*

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peace

Almighty God, Creator, Judge, and Redeemer of all mankind, who maketh the nations to be the rod of thine anger, and the love of Christ to be the hope of the world: We beseech thee to break the evil spell that draws the world toward catastrophe. Grant us grace to check in ourselves and in others every temper which makes for war, all ungenerous judgments, all presumptuous claims, all promptings of arrogance and passion. Give us the patience and the industry to see whole the daily tensions of our time, and deliver us from the sin of saying easy words or making facile judgments out of ignorance. Open up for us and all thy people ways by which we can be used as instruments of peace, so that once again thy Church may become the leaven that changes the world; through Jesus Christ the Lord of history and our Lord. Amen.—*Department of Social Education and Action Staff.*

ALMIGHTY God, Lord of our lives, Sovereign Ruler over all the peoples of the earth, we thank thee that through thy Son, our Redeemer, we have learned to call thee Father—for only as we know thy great love can we bear the tragedy of our present world!

We thank thee for a faith which sees thy great eternal purpose for us, revealed in the Scriptures and in all of history.

Teach us, O God, once again, how really to pray. Create within us a sense of kinship with our world.

Help us, thy people, to know a true repentance which will help us break through our prison houses of self and sin, into a freedom of usefulness to thee. May we lose all sense of superiority and know only a common need of thy grace.

We pray for a powerful release of the Holy Spirit in our times. Be in the affairs of nations, we beseech thee, O God, giving wisdom, understanding, forbearance, and courage. Strengthen the United Nations as an instrument of peace—and help us all, O Lord God, to be willing as individuals and as nations to accept the disciplines that will make for a righteousness from which thou canst give us peace.

These things we ask humbly in Jesus' name. Amen.—*Lenna E. Robison, Texarkana, Tex.; Member, Board of Christian Education.*

Economic Justice

ALMIGHTY God who hast appointed to every man his work, help us to see that honor and dignity belong to all useful toil.

Show us that in our daily work we are called to be partners with thee in supplying the needs of men. Help us to look upon our labor as a call to high service in thy name.

Strengthen us so that in our work we may ever be faithful. In our relationships with others may we always be kind and courteous, patient and understanding.

Help us to renounce the things of dishonesty, and to have no commerce with the works of darkness. Let thy light fill our lives more and more, till we become, in truth, the children of light. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Clifford Earle, Secretary, Department of Social Education and Action.

EVERLASTING Father, God of space, time, and eternity, give us, thy human children, our daily bread. May we have enough food, clothing, housing, and common comforts to grow to fullness under thee. Lift from our brothers everywhere the weight of hunger, poverty, and stunted growth. Help all of us to work at our best that we may not be parasites living in idleness on thy good resources and the labor of others. O Christ, enable us to follow thee and seek for every person the right to work at the job to which thou hast called him. Grant, O God, to every worker a realization of the high dignity that thou hast given to every work. Help us share all the opportunities of life with all men as our brothers and equals, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Algernon O. Steele, Division of Humanities, Johnson C. Smith University.*

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HEAR us, we pray, O Father, when we bring before thee the needs of all the world. In peace and quiet we worship here, but our minds are filled with concern for multitudes who live amid confusion and in anxiety about what tomorrow may bring. Grant this nation in hours of crisis the strength to do justly and to love mercy. Save us from self-interest and self-righteousness. Direct those who labor for peace, and confound those who strive for war. O grant that our own nation may be an instrument in thy hand for the healing of all the nations.

Forbid that those who direct industrial affairs and those who labor in industry should seek their own advantage in forgetfulness of the common good. Grant that all may strive not against each other but together for the best welfare of the whole people and of the whole world. Forbid that we who live in comfort and amid plenty should be forgetful of the destitution and want that stalk abroad in the world. Make our hearts tender and our consciences sensitive, and stir our wills to redemptive action.

Continue thy gracious favor unto us all, and be to us even now and forever the source of all needed help and power. We make our prayer in the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Harry B. Taylor, The Church of the Covenant, Cleveland, Ohio; Member, Board of Christian Education.*

OUR God and Creator, thou who art thyself our life, live anew in us today as we humbly acknowledge that all we possess is thine.

Forgive us, we pray, for greed and thoughtlessness which have despoiled the earth and made us insensitive to want, hunger, and exploitation.

Pardon our arrogance and stupidity which have created economic barriers and false standards of material success.

Give us this day a new reverence for the earth, its forests and topsoils, mineral deposits, and wellsprings. Give us the knowledge and will to use these products of thy creation for thy purposes and the sustenance of generations yet unborn.

Give us this day a new sense of oneness with thy people everywhere—with all those who toil with hands and minds in our homes and farms, in industries and mines, in the professions, in government, in business and trade.

As thou hast given us the knowledge to produce plenty, give us also the wisdom to bring it within the reach of all. Let the power of thy majesty and truth possess us and our daily work this day and in all the days to come. Make us good and faithful servants. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Margaret E. Kuhn, Department of Social Education and Action, Board of Christian Education.

Better Human Relations

OUR God and our Father, we come to thee. To whom else can we go? Thou not only hast the words of eternal life, thou art life itself. We come to thee from a thousand different circumstances and with a multitude of needs. We come, delighting to call thee Father and thrilling to the realization of something of what is bound up in this privilege. Help us truly to be thy children, to love with something of the nature of thy love—impartially, graciously, forgivingly. Grant us that kind of passionate love which we see in Jesus Christ, thy Son, who flamed in indignation when he saw the defenseless and the dispossessed exploited, but who forgave and turned the other cheek when he, himself, faced injustice. Grant us this strong love, this passionate, redemptive love, in Christ's name. Amen.

—Charles B. Templeton, Secretary, Division of Evangelism, Board of National Missions.

for human rights

O God of justice and mercy, whose hatred of sin makes us brothers to all men in our common need of thy grace, we beseech thee to further every effort to build brotherhood among men. Help us to feel in our own person the hurt of thy people who are denied the rights we take for granted. Make us diligent to secure for all the freedom we received as our birthright. Deliver us from the sin of regarding as privileges for others those things we see as rights for ourselves. Give us no peace so long as any child of thine is unjustly deprived of the work, the home, or the education he can earn. And make us wise to support all practical efforts, conceived in good will, to achieve the goal of brotherhood realized. We pray in the name of Christ our Lord, who died for us and all men. Amen.—*H. B. Sissel, Associate Secretary, Department of Social Education and Action, Board of Christian Education.*

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ETERNAL God, our Father, who didst create everything and find it good, thou hast taught us through thy Holy Spirit to hate that which is evil and to cleave to that which is good. Thou hast demonstrated through thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, what it means to truly love others and to have compassion on the least and the lost, the victims of passion, prejudice, and injustice, those discriminated against because of our own and others' sins. Forbid that we should hold our peace out of cowardice or indifference, or even out of mistaken though pure motives, when we see anything in contemporary society that is wrong and out of line with thy will as manifested in the Bible and in the spirit-held convictions of the Church Universal. May deliverance come through the courageous testimony of us, thy obedient servants. Like Queen Esther of old, may each of us be shown that he has been placed where he is for just such a time as this, and believing this, may he unhesitatingly obey that the kingdoms of this world may become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and that he may reign forever and ever. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.—*Henry H. Bucher, Associate Director, Missionary Education, Board of Christian Education.*

O LORD, our God, who dost require of thy people that they do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thee: We acknowledge and confess before thee that we love our privilege more than justice; that we have not been merciful to others as thou hast been merciful to us; and that we walk more in pride than in humility before thee and our fellow men.

O blessed Father, whose Son, Jesus Christ, has made himself one with the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner: May that mind which was in him be also in us, that we may do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than ourselves; and that we may look not only after our own interests, but also to the interest of others. By the power of thy Holy Spirit, stab us awake to injustice and suffering and every human need. Make us to see, as thou wouldst have us see, the hungry and the destitute; and those who, because of race or color or for any other reason, live as strangers in our midst. And grant us compassion for those of our neighbors who live this day in loneliness and despair behind prison walls.

O Lord, who hast given thyself for us and for all men, and who hast promised that whatsoever is done unto the least of these thy brethren, thou wilt receive as done unto thee, so quicken us by thy spirit that our love for thee may show forth in humble and loving service to all thy people. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Nevin E. Kendell, Department of Educational Resources, Board of Christian Education.*

The Nation

ALMIGHTY God, beneath whose divine sovereignty earthly rulers exercise dominion, we pray to thee for the President of the United States of America, who has been called by our voice to administer the affairs of this nation. Except thou sustain his physical strength, he cannot bear the strain of daily fatigue; except thou grant him guidance and wisdom, he will lack light for the difficult path he must walk; except thou nerve his will and inspire courage, he may falter in the decisive moment of hard right against easy wrong; except thy Spirit strive with him he will not beware that in the moment man stands he may fall. Above all that we ask or think, according to the measure of thy grace and power, give thou unto his need. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Dr. Paul S. Wright, Moderator of the General Assembly.

ALMIGHTY God, Lord of heaven and earth, who dost rule all nations in justice and mercy: we bow before thee in thanksgiving and penitence. Thou hast given us this free and fruitful land for a goodly heritage so that none need fear and none need hunger. This people thou hast led by our fathers, men of mighty faith, who in high station or common vocation served their country well by loving and serving thee supremely—with heart, mind, and strength. We rejoice in our fathers' faith and in thee, our fathers' God, whose right it is alone to rule over free men. Forgive, we pray, the poor use we have made of these thy rich gifts. Forgive the fearful, foolish heart that by forsaking thee seeks to gain some better thing. Take us now to thy tuition and care. Send forth now the light of thy truth everywhere upon the land, that this people may find thy way in a confused time. Make plain our path. We earnestly beseech thee to look with favor upon thy servants, the President of the United States and those associated with him in authority over us, our Governor, our Senators and Representatives. Imbue them with the spirit of wisdom and goodness and truth; and so rule in their hearts and bless their endeavors that law and order, justice and peace, may everywhere prevail. And thine shall be the glory and the praise, world without end. Amen.—*Paul Newton Poling, First Presbyterian Church, Salem, Ore.*

ALMIGHTY God, our Father, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations, and still today canst deliver us from the dangers that surround us, from the evil that threatens us from within, and even save us from ourselves, O Lord.

Quicken in us a spirit akin to that of Jesus Christ, until we are awakened and rendered sensitive to the cries of hunger and hopelessness about us. Clarify our understanding, until we see the cause of man's ills in man's ignorance, man's pride, man's greed, man's sin, even our sin, Lord; and help us to recognize, too, that there can be no final solution apart from thy plan and purpose.

We praise thee for those freedoms that form the basis of our common life: the freedom to meet and to speak, freedom to teach and to inquire, freedom to worship thee. Save us, we pray, from those who would lessen them, from those who purvey hate and twist the truth, from those who prostitute any office or position of trust for selfish ends. Teach us again that ancient truth applying alike to men and to nations: that it profits nothing though the world be gained if the soul be lost.

Hear us, Lord, and accept us in service to thee. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.—*Darel McFerren, Professor of History, Hastings College.*

senate prayer

O God our Father, we pray that the people of America, who have made such progress in material things, may now seek to grow in spiritual understanding.

For we have improved means, but not improved ends. We have better ways of getting there, but we have no better places to go. We can save more time, but are not making any better use of the time we save.

We need thy help to do something about the world's true problems—the problem of lying, which is called propaganda; the problem of selfishness, which is called self-interest; the problem of greed, which is called profit; the problem of license, disguising itself as liberty; the problem of lust, masquerading as love; the problem of materialism, the hook which is baited with security.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, for the spiritual understanding which is better than political wisdom, that we may see our problems for what they are. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

—Peter Marshall, Late Chaplain, U. S. Senate.
Offered at the opening of the session on Monday, January 26, 1948.

for the integrity of the united states

Almighty and eternal God, who sendest forth the light, createst the morning, and makest the sun to shine on the just and on the unjust, we pray for this our land, in which thou hast set us and to which we belong.

We give thee thanks for the goodly situation and uncommon resources of sea and mountain, of field and forest, whereby thou hast sustained and enriched our lives beyond all our effort and deserving.

For the faith and freedom in which our people were cradled and from which our political traditions and institutions have been purposed to the honor of thy name and the establishment of brotherly concord among all who dwell among us, we give thee thanks, O God.

God of our fathers, and our God, for the evil days upon which our land has come, we turn to thee in penitence and in confession, beseeching thee to hear us for ourselves and for our nation. O God, whose nature is always to have mercy, have mercy upon us.

Turn us aside from vaunting our own strength before the world; cause us to minister in our plenty to the impoverished and the hopeless in all the earth; make us to welcome the stranger into our midst and to cause him to rejoice among us in our obedience unto thee; and above all cast from our eyes as a people, in high places and in low, the scales by which we see in every man our enemy because we will not love our enemy for Jesus' sake.

When wilt thou save the people? O God of mercy, when? Send us from thy house this day to wait and to work, until thy Kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.—*Paul L. Lehmann, Professor of Applied Christianity, Princeton Theological Seminary.*

HEAVENLY FATHER, GRANT THOSE OF US WHOM THOU HAST SEEN FIT TO GIVE THE POWER OF PUBLIC TRUST A LEADERSHIP TO DO THY WILL.—*Margaret Chase Smith, United States Senator, Maine.*

a prayer for grace as citizens

Help us, O God, to recognize thy will being done in the collective efforts of society, by good citizens through the agencies of government. Help us to discern thy Spirit in measures for racial equality, in provisions for security for the aged, in widows' pensions, in unemployment benefits, in education for the young and special care for little children, in proper housing and public health, in united efforts toward world peace, and in all measures for the common good.

As government embodies and expresses the concern of the greater community, the larger family of mankind, for peace and well-being among the people, give us grace to share gladly in this service as an act of devotion to the least of these our brethren and unto thee, O God, the Father of us all.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.—*James Myers.*

WE BLESS thee, our Father, that thou hast not set us in the midst of life alone, but that thou hast set the solitary in families, and hast gathered families into community and nation; give us grace to remember that thy love and mercy is for all the families and nations of earth. Take from us the misunderstanding and prejudice which keep us from sharing with others the choice blessings we have known at thy hand. Let us by deed, as well as by faithful word, declare the love and compassion of our Saviour for all who are in great need; and enable us to see that whatsoever we do in his name unto the least of these thy children we do as unto him. So may our lives be made useful in thy redeeming work; and our life together be healed of all strife and hurt, through love of our Lord and Master. Amen.

—Brewer L. Burnett,
The Green Ridge Presbyterian Church, Scranton, Pa.

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OUR Lord and Father of mankind, we thank thee for the privilege of being citizens of thy Kingdom, a Kingdom where all things are free, not merely those things that give health and security, but those greater blessings of knowing, loving, and serving thee.

May we be guided daily in our efforts to apply these divine gifts from thy bounty to the earthly neighborhoods in which we all must live—our homes, our churches, our schools, our farms, villages, and cities—until whole nations and a whole world may feel the impact of thy divine concern.

Help us to realize that thy love must be expressed through each of us. Help us to think less of ourselves and more of others. Help us to learn to listen as well as to speak. Help us never to forget that thou hast made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.

Help us to achieve a faith in thee as a loving Father which is not a little faith, accepting blindly what we do not understand, but a vigorous, vitalizing, challenging faith, a vision of greatness, which will transform into a reality the substance of things men everywhere hope for.—*Burton P. Fowler, Member, Counseling Committee on Social Education and Action.*

community relations

O God, Father of all men, who hast set us in communities where we live, play, and work with one another, we beseech thee to bring us to such maturity of spirit that all barriers of class, religion, race, educational background, and earthly wealth may be overcome by loving thee above all else and our neighbors as ourselves.

Give to the rich and privileged a sense of stewardship, that their good fortune may be gratefully and humbly used for the common good. Save the poor and less favored from envy, lest they waste their energies in the vain worship of things and forget the spiritual service they can render with the gifts they already possess.

Help us all to understand that thou didst make thy children of different races for the enrichment of thy whole family, and enable us to treat all thy children as brothers. Guide the leaders of the races into wise and effective ways of overcoming prejudice and segregation, and hasten the day when no liberties will be denied to any of thy children because of the color of their skin.

As we proclaim our faith, save us from a false tolerance which holds that beliefs do not matter, and from a bigotry which overlooks sincere conviction among those who live by other faiths. Reveal to us the ways and places where all who love thee may work together for the common good. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Arthur W. Mielke, Park Central Presbyterian Church, Syracuse, N. Y.; Member, Counseling Committee on Social Education and Action.*

ETERNAL God, who hast revealed thy love for us in the gift of thy Son, make us the human channels of thy love in all the common ways of life. Thou who hast set us in community relationships, make us the instruments of thy will and purpose. By thy grace and sustaining power may our work and conversation this day reveal the gospel of Christ. Deliver us from doing good deeds that they may be seen of men. Save us from thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Forbid that one of thy children shall find it more difficult to believe in thy love because of any word or deed of ours. May we be as lights in a dark world and when our light is dimmed by our pride, or hatred or injustice or lack of courage, save us through Christ, our Lord. Amen.—*William F. Wefer, Executive Secretary, Presbytery of Philadelphia.*

prayer for community of spirit

Almighty and merciful God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, grant unto us such knowledge of thy redeeming purpose in Christ that we shall each share his love, his joy, and his peace.

Since thou in community hast caused us to dwell together, enlighten our minds to comprehend the ties that bind us together as thy children. Let no dissimilarity of color or creed, of wealth or advantage, blind us to another's need. May we love and forgive each other as thou in Christ hast loved and forgiven us.

Let our minds be sensitive to justice, personal, social, and economic; our hearts given to mercy; and our wills committed to establishing thy Kingdom. Acknowledging thee first in our own lives, grant that throughout all places wherein we walk, thy witness may be borne.

Blessed by thy love with the wealth of this day's golden moments, help us to be concerned with our stewardship, using each talent as with the Master. Because thou dost love and trust us, quicken our spirits, we pray, for Christ's sake. Amen.—*John E. Bouquet, First Presbyterian Church, Neenah, Wis.*

ALMIGHTY God and Father of mankind, accept our offering of praise for thy providence in making known unto us thy redemptive purpose for all thy people. We render hearty thanks for thy gracious welcome unto all who call upon thee. We adore thee for thy love which is eternal and for thy mercy which is everlasting.

With contrite hearts now do we humbly implore thy forgiveness of our failure to accept gladly the claims of discipleship. We have been unwilling to look with compassion upon the needs of others, being so concerned with our own needs. Truly we have failed to discern the life and suffering of thy Son for all people, nor have we laid hold upon the power manifested in the resurrection. Empower us by thy Spirit that we may effectively proclaim and live thy truth, that thy will may be done in our homes, in our community, and in our world. In the name of Him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many, ever Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Malcolm P. Calhoun, Secretary, Division of Christian Relations, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

ETERNAL God, our loving Heavenly Father, we praise thee as Lord of our lives and Lord of the Christian home. We thank thee for the gift of life and for the multitude of blessings which flow into our lives and into our home through thy love for us.

Forgive us when we fail to do thy will. Forgive us for the sin of selfishness, pettiness, covetousness, and all the other manifestations of that which is less than our best.

We pray for all parents and homemakers around the world who strive to so live that their homes may be a little part of the work of our Lord Christ. Strengthen them in the disciplines of Christian discipleship and keep them growing closer to thee each day.

Grant to us, who seek to make thy presence known in every activity of this home, the grace of perseverance in seeking to know thy will for our lives; the grace of courage to do thy will; the grace of self-discipline; the grace of understanding, uncomplaining, and unjudging hearts; the grace of kindness to all those who may cross our path this day.

We pray in the name of thy son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

—Betty Fisher, Member, Board of Christian Education and Counseling Committee on Social Education and Action.

ETERNAL God, our Father, thou who didst create the world and all that is therein, and who dost ever sustain thy creation, we are grateful that thou didst not create us and leave us to determine our own destiny. We thank thee that thou hast a purpose for the life of each of thy children, and we acknowledge our sinfulness in seeking that which is well-pleasing in our sight rather than thy sight. Too often we continue to pray, "Lord, show us thy will," when we know thy will but lack the courage to do it because it is not easy. Lord, forgive when ignorance keeps us from knowing the truth, or cowardice makes us satisfied with half-truths. May thy spirit move in our hearts until we seek and know the truth that alone can set us free.

We know, O God, thou didst not set us in the world as individuals, but didst set us each one in families, and so we pray for thy continued blessing upon our homes. May we as parents take seriously the vow made in thy presence to bring up our children "in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord," that they may come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and dedicate their lives to him. In our home life may we not be so much concerned about what we *have* as about what we *are* so that in these days of stress and strain we may not seek to be removed from the world, but may have the inner strengths that will send us out to change the world. Help us in all our relations with our children that we seek not to mold them according to our pattern but to provide the atmosphere that will free them to be what thou wouldst have them to be.

In our homes help us to grow from that love which seeks a blessing in return for each act, to that self-forgetting love in which each gives of himself that the lives of others may be enriched. May each family take its place in that larger family, the Church of Christ around the world, and thus seek to reconcile all men to their brothers and to thee, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory in the Church now and forevermore. Amen.—*Franklin B. Gillespie, Director of Young People's Work, Board of Christian Education.*

Education

O GOD, the light of the minds that love thee, we pray for the colleges and universities of the world.

We thank thee, our Father, for the men and women of all ages and nations who have found life's deepest satisfaction in seeking for the truth and imparting it to others. We thank thee for the teachers who have inspired in us the desire for learning and the courage to act in the truth we have discovered. In a day of unrest when man has turned from reason and has put his trust in force and violence, grant that our centers of learning may remain true to their purpose.

O God, protect us from the sin of mediocrity in our colleges. Forgive us when our universities become simply training schools of men who exploit resources and people. Raise up educators among us who love learning and know how to share that love with youth. Protect our colleges from the curse of becoming too practical. Make them lighthouses which will guide us even when we choose to live in darkness. May the Church be ever loyal to its Christ, who commanded us to love God with our minds. Amen.

—E. Fay Campbell, Secretary, Division of Higher Education, Board of Christian Education.

ALMIGHTY God, whom to know is to witness, raise up, we pray thee, men and women who will be able to teach others also and provide leadership equal to the mission of the Church in this day. Grant us and all thy servants thy transforming presence and redemptive purposes in our responsibilities. Save us from loving programs more than persons, from seeking our partial goals before thy Kingdom and the welfare of thy whole Church, from teaching out of the futility of our minds rather than the truth of the gospel, and from imagining ourselves sufficient rather than reaching out for the knowledges and skills and grace necessary to effective performance of our tasks.

Deliver us, we beseech thee, from all sloth and timidity, from pride that destroys the good disciplines of fellowship, from all discouragement and littleness of faith and vision. Reclothe us in our more rightful minds, until self is swallowed up in discipleship, and we gladly bear one another's burdens and even the marks of our Lord in our bodies. Illumine us, by thy Spirit, so that the blind are led by those who see, and all who lead become as thy light and truth in this darkened world: through him who said, "Follow me." Amen.—*Ralph Mould, Department of Field Program, Board of Christian Education.*

ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, help us always to keep a childlike spirit without which we cannot even enter thy Kingdom, always eager to learn of thee and from others. Deliver us from the arrogant presumption of seeking to dictate what truth shall be.

Open the eyes of our hearts to see in ourselves and in others, even the least, what thou dost see of value in us. Grant us an abiding will to share what we know with all our fellow men.

Gird us with determination to know the truth and to live up to the best that we have learned.

Inspire us with a passionate abandon to life, and free us from ignorance and evil that without counting the cost we may rejoice at every opportunity to defeat evil and death within ourselves and others.

Grant thy spirit to all who teach and administer educational institutions, and especially to parents, as they guide the children committed to their care.

Through Jesus Christ, our Teacher, Saviour, Lord. Amen.—*Edward B. Paisley, Secretary, Department of Graduate Christian Education, Board of Christian Education.*

WE INVOKE, O loving Father, a special blessing for those who suffer from alcoholism.

Give them hope that they can recover, courage to accept their alcoholism, humility to recognize their need for help, courage to fight for their sobriety, sympathy and tolerance for those who do not understand them.

Sustain them day by day as they struggle against the pressures to drink. Comfort them in adversity; protect them against the self-esteem of success. Reveal thyself to them as they seek to know thee better.

May we who have escaped this affliction learn from thy power in their lives that we, too, are utterly dependent upon thee. Amen.

—John Park Lee, Director,
Division of Welfare Agencies, Board of Pensions.

GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE, COURAGE TO CHANGE THINGS I CAN, AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.—*Reinhold Niebuhr, from* The A. A. Grapevine.

OUR Father, our prayers are raised in gratitude that in our world of confusion caused by social ills thou hast raised up great agents of strength to help those who struggle with the problem of alcoholism. We especially ask thy blessing on Alcoholics Anonymous and each man and woman who has come to them for help. Where we have failed in families we ask forgiveness and strength, sympathy and compassion for these whose emotional struggles have wrecked personalities. Dear God, reach down to them thy loving hand, and draw them up to thee—that Greater Power which shall redirect their lives. We pray in faith—believing in thy power. Amen.—*Maude Pino, Member, Board of Christian Education.*

OUR Father, Creator of our minds and bodies, whose temple we are through thy Holy Spirit, whose redemption we have in Jesus Christ: We beseech thee for all those who have made alcohol their god, and who have lost the way in seeking to find it. Forgive us who have created conditions that tempt people to find release from their frustrations through recourse to alcohol. Remove from all of us the easy temptation to solve our problems by creating bigger ones. Lead us to see life beautifully and to see it whole. Teach men the joy of Christian companionship unfettered by artificial bonds. Guide all those who seek to help their fellow men in the conflict against entrenched evils. But deliver us, good Lord, from trying to live our neighbor's life for him.

Awaken thy Church to teach children and youth the truth about alcohol; give our homes power to resist social pressures; teach those who are older to put no stumbling block in the way of another. With understanding may pastors minister to the victims of alcohol, counting precious in God's sight every one into whom he has breathed the spirit of life. In honesty and industry may we provide for our own, and in loyalty to Christ may we seek life that is abundant for all. In his name. Amen.—*Earl F. Zeigler, Editor, Uniform Lessons and* Today, *Board of Christian Education.*

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MOST holy and merciful God, who dost teach us to dread nothing but the loss of thee, and to cast all our cares upon thee: Save us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties that dim the light of our souls. Cast from our minds the worries and apprehensions that becloud our lives and hide from us the light of thy love.

Give us the spirit of trust so that all fear and foreboding may be cast out, and that right reason and calm assurance may rule our thoughts and wills. May quietness and confidence be our strength. Teach us to take thy hand in the darkness, and to hear thy voice: "Fear not, for I am with thee. I have called thee by thy name."

Lead us into the secret of thy peace; quiet every misgiving and fill our hearts with joy and confidence. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. —*Clifford Earle.*

The Answers

First Voice:

And I returned and saw two strangers,
Holding conversation in the midst of the people.

Second Voice:

The Elder spoke:
"The Lord Almighty, Sustainer of the Universe,
Has sent me to minister to your needs,
For the sound of your sighing has reached to the throne."

Unison:

And the starving people cried with one voice,
"Give us bread! Give us bread!"

Second Voice:

And the elder man's countenance saddened as he replied,
"It is written, 'By bread alone man shall not live.' "

Third Voice:

And the young man in anger cried, "Hypocrisy!
Whether by bread alone man lives, I know not;
But this I know: he lives by bread.
Come, I will give you bread if you follow me.
We ourselves will supply bread, for there is no God."

Second Voice:

Then the elder stranger, hand upraised,
As if to ward off that blasphemy, cried,
"It is God alone who gives the increase
To all the labor of our hands.
In him is the truth which you must find,
Or the bread you eat will not suffice.
Deep, deep is the need for truth,
As deep as the need for bread."

Unison:

But the despairing people were hungry
And would not stay to listen further.

First Voice:

I saw a multitude gathered around them;
And heard the noise of the people's contention,
For some were made to serve the others;
The advanced people preyed on the backward.

Second Voice:

The Elder spoke:
"The Eternal, the Father of every people,
Has sent me to minister to your needs,
For he has heard your sighing."

Unison:

And all the suffering colonial people
Cried as one, "Rid us of our oppressors!"

Second Voice:

And his countenance saddened as he replied:
"I cannot by the might of these hands
Take from your lands those that oppress you,
For the weapons given unto me are
Persuasion and love and reason and judgment.
But I shall hide His law in their hearts,
And the oppressor shall become the brother."

Third Voice:

And the young man in anger cried, "Hypocrisy!
Come, I will rid you of your oppressors,
And today's downtrodden shall rule with me
All the kingdoms of the world."

Second Voice:

The Elder spoke:
"No single human law will stand
Till the law of God is writ on the heart.
Man lives by the law which God has given,
Or he shatters himself upon its bulwarks.
And this law I preach to all who oppress you:
That men of all places and conditions are brothers.
Deep, deep is the need for community,
As deep as the need for freedom."

Unison:

But the people chafed under the weight of their burdens,
And would not stay to listen longer.
They followed in the way of the youthful stranger
And the Elder stood deserted and silent.
And their cries of "Hypocrisy!" rang in his ears.

—*Adapted from* The Answers, *A Piece for a Verse Choir, by Darius Leander Swann. Friendship Press, Inc.*

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The Lord's Prayer

OUR Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy *Kingdom* come.
Thy will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give *us* this day *our* daily bread.
And forgive *us our* debts,
as *we* forgive *our* debtors.
And lead *us* not into temptation,
but deliver *us* from evil:
For thine is the *Kingdom*,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen.